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Economic and environmental questions: public administration and development

Draft resolution submitted by the Vice-President of the Council, Frederick Musiiwa Makamure Shava (Zimbabwe), on the basis of informal consultations

Report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its fifteenth session

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolutions 2012/28 of 27 July 2012, 2013/23 of 24 July 2013, 2014/38 of 18 November 2014, 2015/28 of 22 July 2015 and other related resolutions on public administration and development, in which it affirmed that service to citizens should be at the centre of transforming public administration and that the foundations of sustainable development at all levels include transparent, participatory and accountable governance and a professional, ethical, responsive and information and communications technology-enabled public administration,

Reaffirming General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of this Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions — economic, social and environmental — in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

Reaffirming also General Assembly resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[1] supports and complements it, helps to contextualize its means of

[1] General Assembly resolution 70/1.

Please recycle

implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, and reaffirms the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 69/327 of 14 September 2015, by which the Assembly reaffirmed the importance of freedom, human rights, national sovereignty, good governance, the rule of law, peace and security, combating corruption at all levels and in all its forms, and effective, accountable and inclusive democratic institutions at the subnational, national and international levels as central to enabling inclusive and accountable public services for sustainable development,

Noting the importance of integrating climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning,

Referring to the United Nations Convention against Corruption,[2] which entered into force on 14 December 2005,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 70/184, in which it recognized the need to harness the potential of information and communications technologies as critical enablers of sustainable development and to overcome the digital divide, and stressing that capacity-building for the productive use of such technologies should be given due consideration in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 69/228 of 19 December 2014 on promoting and fostering the efficiency, accountability, effectiveness and transparency of public administration by strengthening supreme audit institutions, in which the Assembly emphasized that efficient, accountable and transparent public administration has a key role to play in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals,

Recognizing the role of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration in providing policy advice and programmatic guidance to the Council on issues related to governance and public administration, and the relevance of the Committee's work to the implementation of and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its fifteenth session,[3] and expresses its appreciation for the work done by the Committee on moving from commitments to results in transforming public institutions to facilitate inclusive policy formulation and integration in the implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals, in accordance with the 2016 theme of the Council;

2. *Invites* the Committee to place the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[1] at the centre of its work and to continue advising the Council on how public administrations can support the implementation and progress reviews of the Sustainable Development Goals;

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[2] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2349, No. 421466.

[3] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2016, Supplement No. 24* (E/2016/44).

3. *Welcomes* the contribution of the Committee to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, and invites Member States to make the principle of leaving no one behind a core principle of public administration;

Role of public institutions

4. *Stresses* that an effective public administration is a fundamental condition for the successful implementation and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets;

5. *Welcomes* the fact that many countries are in the process of identifying and updating policies, strategies, institutions and arrangements for spearheading and coordinating the implementation and progress review of the Sustainable Development Goals, looks forward to the exchange of lessons learned on this topic at the high-level political forum in July 2016, and notes the importance of the sectoral ministries, in developing and implementing policies in their respective areas, taking into account the interrelationships inherent in the Goals;

6. *Acknowledges* the need to develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels, and to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels;

Integrated policies for the Sustainable Development Goals

7. *Encourages* Governments to develop institutional arrangements and mechanisms for supporting the development and implementation of coherent and integrated policies for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, noting that this also requires sustained leadership and that cooperation, consultation, engagement, dialogue and partnership should be the modus operandi of public administrations and public servants;

8. *Notes* the importance of a clear framework for allocating responsibilities related to the Sustainable Development Goals and for establishing the working relationships between the national and subnational levels of government;

9. *Underscores* the fact that local governments have a critical role in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, given their proximity to the population and at the grass-roots level, their role in delivering basic public services and their ability to take integrated approaches, bearing in mind that Goal 11 is to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;

10. *Stresses* that the responsibilities of local governments for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals should be supported by adequate human and financial resources and capacities;

11. *Recommends* that national and local governments, in their first steps to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, identify implementation priorities, targets and institutional arrangements and, inter alia, determine who is at risk of being left behind, drawing on broad consultations and engagement with civil society, with particular consideration given to necessary institutional reforms, as well as adjustments to policies, capacities and resources;

12. *Calls for* innovative efforts to build the capacities of public institutions for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals in areas such as coherent

policymaking, planning, implementation, foresight, evidence-based reviews of progress and the collection and use of statistics and data;

13. *Calls upon* Governments and other relevant actors to sustain the promotion of creativity, innovation and excellence in public administration, inter alia, by transforming administrative structures, processes, legislation and regulations based on information and communications technology and the Internet;

Participatory decision-making and inclusive service delivery

14. *Encourages* Governments to develop an open government system as a model of governance that focuses on citizens and establishes a new relationship between public administration and society;

15. *Recognizes* that the policies for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals should be evidence-based, developed in a participatory, inclusive and collaborative fashion and focused on achieving results;

16. *Notes* that realizing the Sustainable Development Goals will require major efforts and investments to raise awareness about the Goals, build ownership of the Goals and create a culture of inclusive engagement and responsibility among all stakeholders through education, communication, interaction, advocacy and capacity-building;

17. *Recognizes* that fostering open government and promoting citizen engagement are essential to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

18. *Also recognizes* the transformative power of information and communications technology while noting that many forms of digital divide remain, and stresses that approaches to the delivery of public services for sustainable development must be multidimensional in order to reach the poorest and most vulnerable;

19. *Notes* the value of the United Nations e-Government Survey as a tool in support of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;

20. *Encourages* Governments pursuing open government initiatives to conduct an independent evaluation of the impact of such initiatives on the quality of public services and on the strengthening of transparency, accountability and social inclusion, with a view to enhancing efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals;

Diversity and non-discrimination

21. *Expects* that the promotion of inclusion and diversity as a positive force, together with global values related to mutual respect among people of all backgrounds and views, will drive changes necessary for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and advises that efforts in this regard need to focus both on society at large and on public servants;

22. *Recognizes* that, within public institutions, a balance must be found between the concern for integrating people who have been discriminated against, on the one hand, and the concerns for giving equal chances to all and ensuring the efficient functioning of institutions, on the other hand;

23. *Notes* that ensuring inclusiveness by and within public administration requires committed and inclusive leadership and a holistic, coherent and integrated vision in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, which may include the establishment of institutional and legislative diversity frameworks and mechanisms at all levels;

24. *Calls upon* Governments to proactively pursue policies to ensure that public services and public action improve the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable and those who are discriminated against;

25. *Also calls upon* Governments to develop innovative approaches, including community-driven development, to ensure that public services fully benefit the poorest and most vulnerable, inter alia, through the establishment of policy impact assessments, institutional and legislative frameworks and mechanisms to ensure that no one is left behind, as well as partnering with communities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector;

26. *Invites* Governments to consider measures to understand and address the factors driving discrimination and exclusion in public institutions on the basis of equal opportunity permitting the full realization of human potential;

Oversight and accountability in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

27. *Recognizes* that corruption will undermine the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and stresses that combating corruption at all levels requires a broad approach to preventing, detecting and punishing corrupt practices at the social level and targeted approaches to address the specific types of corruption that block the achievement of particular Goals;

28. *Encourages* Governments to ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements, in order to allow citizens to hold State institutions accountable for the use of resources entrusted to them and for their performance in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals;

29. *Notes* that a transparent election process at both the national and local levels is crucial for a committed, ethical and engaged leadership;

30. *Underscores* the fact that policies, programmes and actions for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals should be designed and monitored in a participatory and transparent manner with a built-in concern for accountability;

Public servants and the Sustainable Development Goals

31. *Considers* that successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals depends on a merit-based civil service, which helps to promote public ethics and ensures effective and fair human resources management;

32. *Calls upon* Governments to ensure that public institutions include civil servants from all segments of the population, that civil servants receive effective training and that they are subject to fair and merit-based employment decisions;

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Follow-up

33. *Invites* Member States, the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations, educational and research institutions, schools of public administration and other organizations to collaborate in raising awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals, which may involve the organization of various activities, including meetings and symposiums;

34. *Requests* the Committee, at its sixteenth session, to examine and make recommendations on the theme of that session of the Council, to be held from 24 to 28 April 2017;

35. *Invites* the Committee to contribute to the thematic review of the high-level political forum, giving particular attention to the cross-cutting nature of all the Sustainable Development Goals;

36. *Also invites* the Committee to continue advising on approaches and practices related to the institutions, policies and arrangements being established to promote implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, bearing in mind that the specific context and situation of countries differ widely;

37. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the present resolution fully into account in the work of the Organization, inter alia, in addressing gaps in research and analysis and in responding to the capacity development needs of Member States for building effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels in pursuit of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

38. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to promote and support innovation and excellence in public services for sustainable development through the United Nations Public Service Awards;

39. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to report on the implementation and follow-up to the present resolution through the established working methods of the Committee.